

*Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning.
Out of intense complexities intense simplicities emerge.*

—Sir Winston Churchill



Combat Camera Imagery (Val Gemples)

Single Port Management

Unloading equipment at Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

By WALTER KROSS

EDITOR'S Note

TRANSCOM serves as the DOD single worldwide manager for common user ports of embarkation and debarkation. Single port management is necessary to ensure the seamless transfer of cargo and equipment in any given theater. However, single port management is a doctrinal concept that has not been institutionalized by geographical CINCs. The consequences were revealed in delays that hindered port movements during operations such as Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Joint Endeavor, and Uphold Democracy. To ensure that future deployments are conducted successfully, guidance on the responsibilities of the single port manager must be clearly defined in joint doctrine.

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While joint doctrine evolves, the Secretary of Defense has designated U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) as the single worldwide manager for common user ports of embarkation and debarkation. Yet this doctrinal concept has not been fully embraced by the theater warfighters, the geographic CINCs in whose areas of responsibility the ports lie. As TRANSCOM endeavors to execute its charter to provide strategic land, sea, and air transport across the full range of military operations, it is imperative that the geographic CINCs

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be well informed on the validity, pertinence, and value added of single port management doctrine and be committed to implementing it.¹

Single port management doctrine will provide the continuity and seamless transfer of cargo and equipment at seaports and aerial ports, an important consideration largely missing in contingencies such as Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Uphold Democracy, and Restore Hope. The principles contained in Joint Pub 4-01, *Joint Doctrine for the Defense Transportation System*, have been tested in exercises conducted in the Pacific by the Army component of TRANSCOM, Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC). However, three major challenges remain. First, the geographic CINCs have not fully accepted the doctrine in contingency plans. Second, doctrine on single port management must be included in revisions of all pertinent joint pubs. Third, the concept must be included in all joint training and theater level exercises.

TRANSCOM, through its Air Force component, Air Mobility Command (AMC), operates strategic aerial ports in both established theaters where forces and infrastructure are permanent and contingency theaters where forces and infrastructure are temporary. Current doctrine has the unified CINCs planning on well-defined support for contingency aerial port operations, a mission TRANSCOM meets by using AMC deployable tanker airlift control elements and mission support teams for contingencies. But challenges remain in their execution. For example, the director of mobility forces (DIRMOBFOR)—a key player in aerial port management—is addressed in Joint Pub 3-17, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (JTTP) for Theater Airlift Operations*, and Joint Pub 4-01.1, *JTTP for Airlift Support to Joint Operations*:

*DIRMOBFOR exercises coordinating authority between the airlift coordination cell (ALCC), air mobility element (AME), or tanker airlift control center (TACC) if no AME is deployed, joint movement center (JMC), and the joint air operations center (JAOC) in order to expedite the resolution of any airlift problems.*²

The issue is educating users and following doctrine. In Joint Endeavor, controversy over aerial port management and airlift staging/support requirements resulted in the theater command not providing the personnel needed for ALCC to effectively coordinate with DIRMOBFOR and AME. Consequently, AME struggled to perform the missions. DIRMOBFOR was assigned to Vincenza, Italy, isolated from the theater command in Stuttgart, Germany. That compounded coordination problems and hampered the interface between theater and strategic airlift. Army commanders, in their rush to put forces on the ground, consistently pushed tactical vehicles and personnel ahead of airfield operations equipment and operators resulting in a 3-5 day delay of airflow into the theater. Additionally, Army cargo was not moved off the airfield in a timely manner at

as a result of Joint Endeavor, problems with aerial port management doctrine are being addressed

Taszar and Tuzla, and encampments were built on valuable staging and airfield parking areas.

As a result of Joint Endeavor, problems with aerial port management doctrine in areas such as DIRMOBFOR have been recognized and are being addressed. In the interim, lack of doctrine and formal agreements between TRANSCOM and unified commands over seaport management in the theater means seaport operations have been conducted on an ad hoc basis.

TRANSCOM, through MTMC, usually manages seaports of embarkation and debarkation in any given theater. However, when deploying forces and sustainment to a contingency theater, the command is not always selected to manage ports of debarkation, a mission that MTMC efforts have sought to clarify and improve over the past several years.

MTMC operates 25 common-user water seaports worldwide. It books military cargo with commercial carriers, contracts for terminal services, interfaces with host nations on seaport-related issues, prepares documentation such as ship manifests, develops and

operates seaport management systems, and conducts surveys of seaport capabilities around the world. In spite of proven MTMC expertise in global seaport management and the assignment of that mission to TRANSCOM under the unified command plan, theater CINCs have not routinely employed MTMC to manage seaport services in the past, especially in contingency theaters where it lacks permanent peacetime presence. Recent deployments illustrate why MTMC and TRANSCOM have made integration of the single seaport management concept into joint doctrine and the defense transportation system such a priority.

Operational Experience

Desert Shield was the first of many contingency operations in which ad hoc arrangements resulted in inefficiencies and confusion. For example,

24th Infantry Division equipment initially arrived by sea at Ad Dammam, Saudi Arabia, in September 1990. Members of the 7th Transportation

Group offloaded cargo and managed the seaport of debarkation. Although its primary expertise lies in transportation operations, the group continued to manage the port during the operation. Military standard transportation and movement procedures cargo records were incomplete, and in-transit visibility to the theater CINC was not readily available. Cargo continued to be offloaded from ships and stockpiled on docks. Accountability was lost and onward movement to the troops was sometimes frustrated. Through summer and autumn 1991, MTMC gradually assumed the seaport management mission during redeployment, freeing the 7th Transportation Group to redeploy to the continental United States.

A year later, our troops were deployed to Africa twice. During Restore Hope in Somalia, the joint task force (JTF) commander initially assigned seaport management to the Navy and later to the Army. Shifting responsibility resulted in confusion over who was in charge and on at least one occasion



Loading tanks onto
Cape Douglas at
Antwerp, Belgium.

U.S. Army (Pamela B. Simmons)



Loading vehicle into hold
of President Adams in
Port of Oakland.

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enabled the service with seaport control to give priority to its own requirements while other cargo was delayed.³ During a similar deployment, Support Hope in Rwanda, MTMC played a key role in planning for seaport operations at Mombassa, Kenya, and performing a full range of functions. It provided positive experience and lessons in developing single seaport management.

U.S. forces were also deployed to southwest Asia in 1994 for Vigilant Warrior because of an Iraqi threat. MTMC participated in the planning and was among the first units on the ground. Here it performed the full range of seaport management responsibilities, to include documentation oversight, information management, and liaison with the host nation. When operating elements of 7th Transportation Group arrived, MTMC continued managing the port as the group provided the seaport operations work force. During this event the management and operations roles were better defined than in Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Although imperfect, deconflicting responsibilities and the overall success of Vigilant Warrior have made

the operation into a model for subsequent work on the single port manager concept.

MTMC personnel were among the first to deploy to Haiti in 1994 for Uphold Democracy, but the seaport management responsibilities were split between MTMC and an Army composite transportation group. The lack of clear roles for seaport management and seaport operating forces resulted in a duplication of effort, competition for resources, and complicated relations between the organizations.

Recent deployments clearly point to a need for improved planning and execution of seaport management and

seaport management and operations functions must be clearly defined and understood by everyone

operations. Experience in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Uphold Democracy, and Restore Hope revealed the value of consistent joint doctrine. The shift in responsibility from one organization to another created the need for working interfaces at critical times and resulted in loss of cargo visibility, documentation, and accountability. Without a grasp of how operations work, seaport personnel waste their time resolving organizational issues when they should be focused on CINC requirements. Finally, as each organization is different, commanders can

never be sure that they have proper support or that the sequence of ship offloading reflects their priorities.

Facing the Challenge

Several basic tenets must be applied to improve the strategic/theater interface. First, CINCs must know immediately which organization will be seaport manager and reflect that factor in their plans. Second, the seaport manager must remain constant so that changes in seaport operators are transparent to the supported CINCs. Third, CINC requirements must be foremost, with priorities translated directly into workload instructions for seaport operators. Fourth, CINCs must be aware of where their cargoes are in the defense transportation system. Fifth, to accomplish these tasks, MTMC and an Army composite transportation group must be deployed early, possibly even on the first plane.⁴ Finally, joint training should integrate and exercise different joint seaport operating force packages in various scenarios and geographic areas, testing joint forces to plan, execute, and coordinate such operations under realistic conditions.

To effect change, seaport management and operations functions must be clearly defined and understood by everyone. This recognition must be reflected in both joint and Army doctrine as well as in arrangements between TRANSCOM and theater CINCs.



Loading tank
onto *USNS Cuato* in
Saudi Arabia.

U.S. Army (Robert Elliott)

These responsibilities must also be reflected in operation plans, and accountable organizations must be trained. The TRANSCOM action plan, *Defense Transportation System 2010*, precisely sets that goal:

An efficient and timely transfer of cargo, passengers (including patients) and information between strategic and theater elements is key to responsive force projection. From the user's perspective, this exchange must be "seamless"; that is, the responsible procedures, systems, and organizations are "transparent" to the ultimate customer and result in a fort-to-foxhole delivery system.

A plateau in doctrine development was reached in a 1995 agreement between the commanding general, MTMC, and the Army Chief of Transportation who determined that a common understanding and clearly documented responsibilities are imperative. Their organizations developed a "concept of management and operations of strategic, common-user contingency seaports," more commonly referred to as the single port manager (SPM) concept of operations.

This concept defines distinct roles and responsibilities for seaport managers and operators. It outlines seaport manager functions needed to control the strategic flow of cargo and information between the worldwide seaport of

embarkation and a hand-off to the theater CINC and identifies seaport operator functions required to move and document surface cargo. Key aspects of the SPM concept are that MTMC—a TRANSCOM component—will provide planners to supported CINCs to develop seaport management and operations requirements during planning. MTMC, at the request of supported commanders and under the direction of TRANSCOM, conducts seaport assessments, establishes contact with local seaport authorities, and determines availability of host nation support. MTMC deploys a seaport management cell into theater that translates the requirements of theater CINCs into workload instructions for seaport operators. Under this concept, MTMC serves as the seaport manager in all scenarios, from the most primitive, requiring over the shore delivery, to the most sophisticated, such as in Saudi Arabia. Finally, MTMC acts as seaport manager throughout an operation, beginning with planning and continuing until the last cargo returns home.

Although the SPM concept of operations was a real accomplishment, an agreement between two Army organizations does not make the single seaport manager concept a reality. It must also be advanced in joint pubs which set forth doctrine, principles, and policy to govern joint activities. As reflected in its action plan, TRANSCOM

is in the process of submitting changes on aspects of single seaport management within the joint publications review cycle.

Building the Future

The single port manager concept envisions MTMC as the theater seaport manager through the use of management cells with elements located under theater CINCs or JTF staffs and at each designated common-user seaport. The management cell is part of a larger joint strategic seaport operating force package designed by U.S. Atlantic Command. It is comprised of elements from TRANSCOM, MTMC, 7th Transportation Group, Military Sealift Command (the Navy component of TRANSCOM), Navy and Marine terminal service forces, and Coast Guard. Capabilities include command, control, and communications; seaport preparation, operations, security, and safety; and logistics. Command and control is built around an MTMC seaport management cell.

As MTMC establishes itself as worldwide single seaport manager, it must ensure that it can perform effectively. A fundamental step is identifying and training managers. The initial concept envisions seaport management cells with preselected military and civilian personnel which would perform management functions similar to their peacetime jobs. They would prepare for a wartime mission through routine training exercises.

MTMC-Pacific, with headquarters at Wheeler Army Airfield in Hawaii, implemented SPM training in 1994 using management teams of military and civilian personnel from their headquarters and each Pacific medium port command. Equipment to support seaport operations is now prepositioned in Okinawa for quick transit to facilities in the Pacific. The teams enabled MTMC-Pacific personnel to tailor a seaport management package to perform the manager mission at seaports where there is no U.S. military presence.

In Europe as in the Pacific, MTMC has a long-established personnel structure which staffs seaport management cells that were successfully deployed in

Support Hope and Vigilant Warrior. The personnel, training, and expertise are in place and able to conform to CINC requirements.

The command also has established a small permanent presence in southwest Asia to provide regional seaport management. Its personnel have the skills to perform contingency seaport management functions and offer continuity to ensure that theater CINC priorities and guidance are met from the onset of a contingency. They are aware of host nation sensitivities and port business practices; and they have the capabilities to train follow-on active and Reserve component personnel. New arrivals in theater will not have the corporate memory or institutional knowledge that senior MTMC military and civilian personnel bring to the table.

While pulling seaport management personnel from the existing command structure is viable for smaller humanitarian contingencies,

re-engineering to reduce peacetime force levels complicates seaport management planning

re-engineering to reduce peacetime force levels complicates seaport management planning for major regional contingencies. In the ongoing struggle to reduce peacetime force structure and maintain adequate readiness, MTMC is looking externally in order to staff management cells. The Army currently uses contract supervision and cargo documentation detachments which are not assigned to MTMC during peacetime. However, they are designed to perform functions which MTMC envisions belong to contingency seaport management cells. The contract supervision detachments provide transportation terminal services through contracts for loading and discharging cargo from ships or barges and clearing cargo from terminals. The cargo documentation detachments perform functions required to load and discharge cargoes or containers at terminals. Contract supervision and cargo documentation detachments, augmented by existing MTMC

staff personnel, can effectively manage a seaport.

MTMC has worked closely with Forces Command to determine how units can support the SPM concept. The primary challenge is perceived doctrinal prohibition. Though not strictly forbidden, units designed for deployment, such as the contract supervision and cargo documentation detachments, are not normally aligned to nondeploying units. MTMC is working with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command to clarify doctrine and change perceptions.

The line-up that MTMC seeks is critical to training, which is the next phase of the single seaport manager challenge. The wartime alignments established in operation plans decide which organizations are responsible for unit training. In the last year, MTMC has established itself as seaport manager in operation plans. CINC reluctance to relinquish control of forces operating in theater to TRANSCOM

initially frustrated those efforts. Although the unified command plan specifically assigns TRANSCOM operational control of its components, theater CINCs have historically viewed that as intruding on their span of control. To further the single seaport manager concept, TRANSCOM agreed to sometimes place MTMC forces under the operational control of theater CINCs to perform single seaport management. That broke the impasse and enabled MTMC planners to convince CINCs to include seaport management forces, still aligned to MTMC, in their plans. MTMC can now focus on developing and implementing a comprehensive seaport management training program.

With regard to training, MTMC-Pacific personnel have again been pioneers. The management teams routinely manage seaports in exercises and support unit rotations throughout the Pacific at both developed and remote sites in Thailand, Australia, and Hawaii. MTMC included individuals from its aligned units to augment these teams

by providing these individuals with valuable training at remote sites. The command will work in the future toward creating a standard training program, building on the experiences of the Pacific management teams.

Because the command management cell is part of a larger joint seaport operating force package, seaport personnel also need training beyond the MTMC-developed program. TRANSCOM asked for help in May 1995 from the Army Chief of Transportation to develop and implement a training program. Once generated, training should be hands-on and integrate joint forces, including active and Reserve components. It should exercise joint seaport operating force packages under different scenarios around the world. In addition, much of this training will occur under a joint deployment training center, a program under development by TRANSCOM to provide joint training for a range of deployment activities.

The road from seaport management in Desert Shield to the MTMC single seaport manager concept was long. If the United States executes another deployment like that to the Persian Gulf in 1990-91, seaport operations still may not be flawless. However, with defined responsibilities and joint doctrine accepted and implemented by theater CINCs and reinforced with trained and ready seaport management personnel, MTMC can support the geographic CINCs with a seamless fort-to-foxhole joint management team. **JFQ**

NOTES

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² Joint Pub 3-17, *JTTP for Theater Airlift Operations*, p. II-4.

³ Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1995), p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.